

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVII., No. 11.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, March 13, 1872.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVI., No. 11.

Poetry.

WHITE AS SNOW.

(Isa. 1: 18.)

"White as snow!" Oh, what a promise
For the heavy-laden breast!
When by faith the soul receives it,
Weariness is changed to rest.

Red like crimson, deep as scarlet—
Scarlet of the deepest dye,
Are the manifold transgressions
That would else upon me lie.

God alone can count their number;
God alone can look within;
O, the sinfulness of sinning!
O, the guilt of every sin.

God's own law, so just and holy,
Proves my sin and shame and loss,
But what it proves it still more clearly
Is the story of the cross.

Heavy-laden, worn and weary,
To the promise let me go;
Though your sins be red as crimson,
They shall be as white as snow.

"White as snow!" Oh, have you watched it
Softly carpeting the ground,
Wrathing with a wreath of silver,
Every common thing around?

"White as snow;" Can my transgressions
Thus be wholly washed away,
Leaving not a trace behind them
Like a cloudless summer day?

Yes, at once, and that completely,
Through the blood of Christ, I know,
All my sins, though red like crimson,
May become as white as snow.

I believe the glorious record
God has given of His Son;
I accept the free salvation
His atoning death has won.

EXEQUY.

ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED WIFE.

Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed,
Never to be disquieted;
My last "Good night;" thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake;
Till age, or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
Of so much loves, and fill the room
My hearts keeps empty in thy tomb.

Stay for me there; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale;
And think not much of my delay,
I am already on the way;
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make or sorrow breed.
Each minute is a short degree,
And every hour a step toward thee.

At night, when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my wail
Of life, almost by eight hours' rest,
Than when sleep breathed his drowsy gale.

Bishop of Chichester.

Religious.

WHY PUT OUT THE LIGHT?

BY REV. J. B. JETER, D. D.

The gospel furnishes the only light shed on the country beyond the river of death. Bright and glorious are the prospects which it unveils to the good in the land. Thousands have lived in hope, and died in triumph, under its inspiring light. If the gospel is not true, the light of heaven is extinguished, the consolations of hope are abolished, and the mystery of existence is impenetrable and bewildering. If the gospel is false, man, with angelic powers and immortal aspirations, is reduced to the condition of a brute, predestinated merely to eat, drink, and sleep, to propagate his race, to toil and suffer, to die and rot. It cannot be unreasonable to demand that men who have made such appalling discoveries shall be pained at their success. Not to be grieved at the extinguishment of the light, and hope, and comfort of the world would indicate a measure of insensibility, or a bias of mind unfavourable to the earnest, candid, and successful search after truth.

A clergyman now deceased once told the writer that he heard the distinguished and eloquent John Randolph of

* From "The Seal of Heaven," published by the American Tract Society.

Roanoke say, that he was in his early years inclined to infidelity. At that time, through the influence of Mr. Jefferson, and the popularity of the French Revolution, it was common for well-educated young men to avow their want of faith in the Bible. Mr. Randolph said that, scorning to adopt opinions without examination, he resolved to investigate the claims of Christianity to divine inspiration. He deemed it fair, as the Bible was a record of the Christian religion, to read that first. He commenced a careful and searching examination of it, not doubting but that he should find the proofs of its falsehood. He had not read through it, he stated, before he was convinced that a mole might have composed the Principia of Newton as easily as uninspired men could have written the Bible. His conduct was not always in harmony with his convictions; but subsequently, through all the vicissitudes of his remarkable and somewhat eccentric life, he was an open, earnest defender of Christianity. Such, we judge, would be the common, if not the universal result of an intelligent and honest examination of the Scriptures. The intellect would be convinced, if the heart were not won. This is usually the first stage in the process of conversion.

We commend then to you, skeptics of every class and grade, a thorough investigation of the claims of Christianity to your belief and reverence. It invites, demands, challenges your scrutiny. You owe it to yourselves, to society, to truth, and to God, to examine it, with a seriousness corresponding with the gravity of the subject of which it treats; a fairness that can be warped by no inclination, interest, or preconception; a thoroughness, that will leave no material witness unquestioned; and a persistence, that will not stop short of a full and firm conviction; and, reaching the conclusion that Christianity is true, to embrace it heartily, adorn it by your lives, and commend it to the acceptance of the world; or, finding it to be a delusion, to clothe yourselves in sackcloth, and to weep and lament that the only light, solace, and hope of the world are gone for ever.

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE.

Perhaps there is no hymn at present more universally used in our devotional meetings, than that beautiful hymn of Sarah F. Adams', "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Yet we never hear it sung without asking ourselves, do they understand the prayer they are offering?

"Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee;
E'en though it be a cross, that raiseth me;
Still all my prayer shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee."

Christian, have you ever had a bitter sorrow, and do you know by experience what a cross means?

And has that cross brought with it such a joy that you fear not again to take it up and bear it?

Are you not afraid to pray for the nearness to Christ, that comes only through a cross? For nothing brings Christ as near to his children as bearing the cross he bore. But do you not shrink back in trembling from offering such a prayer?

You need not fear if you ask it knowing that which you are asking, and are willing to have the prayer answered in God's way: for with the cross comes Christ.

We once said to a young Christian, "Do you realize what you are asking for when you sing that hymn?"

"Yes," was the reply, and raising her hand with a deprecating sort of gesture she said, "But I always feel like adding, 'Not yet, Lord, ah, not yet.'"

Since then she has learned what the cross means.

Nor is this an unnatural feeling, for though the soul may long to be raised, the poor weak flesh shrinks from the cross and the suffering.

Yet fear not to offer the prayer, ever bearing in mind that if you offer if God will answer it, and answer it perhaps as you little thought, or desired; but you

will find as well, that you little thought how near He who had borne the cross for you, would come when the cross was laid upon you to bear, nor the joy his coming would bring with it. You will then be enabled to say, "Take all, dear Lord Jesus, only give thyself."

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one
And there's a cross for me."

"The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me."

REST IN PRAYER.

Are not Christians often unnecessarily puzzled as to what to expect from their prayers, not understanding, nor being able to believe how they really receive answers to them?

Much difficulty may be owing to some perverted idea, that, because the great God offers to answer our requests, we are encouraged to come to Him, as if to move some great, indeed infinite Power—reverentially speaking as if some great mechanical force was offered to be subject to our control. Christians thus coming must often be disappointed.

But granted that such power with God were put into our hands; granted that he would do absolutely just what we asked for, who would dare to exert such a power? or be willing that his friends should do so? No one who in any degree realized how the judgment of any finite intelligence, however exalted, might almost immediately throw into confusion all the wheels of the universe.

Such a power too would only take hold of the Lord's omnipotence. Thanks to him a higher privilege is granted to the believer. God invites us to use, not his power only, but his wisdom, his love, his knowledge, his judgment. This indeed is taking hold upon God himself, not making use, as it were, of one alone of his attributes, but of all of them.

This we do whenever we come to him, as to the Father, which he is, asking what we think must be or may be agreeable to his will, yet leaving it to him in whom we can so fully trust, to decide the matter. Bringing it thus before him, "we can, like loving, trustful children, with cheerful submission, leave our prayer with him, knowing that, if best he will grant it. Otherwise we do not wish for it."

Thus in His will ours rests satisfied, and we have in truth that which we desire of him.

A Christian thus believing that his most wise and loving and omnipotent Father will do about his prayer exactly what he would himself do, if endowed with like powers, will indeed go from the mercy-seat with sincere restfulness of spirit.—*Ch. Weekly.*

TRUE FAITH.

A blind girl had been in the habit of reading her Bible by the means of raised letters, such as are prepared for the use of the blind; but after a while, by working in a factory, the tips of her fingers became so calloused that she could no more by her hands read the precious promises. She cut off the tips of her fingers that her touch might be more sensitive; but still she failed with her hands to read the raised letters. In her sorrow she took the Bible and said, "Farewell, my dear Bible. You have been the joy of my heart!" Then she pressed the open pages to her lips and kissed it, and as she did so she felt with her mouth the letters, "The Gospel according to St. Mark." "Thank God!" she said, "if I cannot read my Bible with my fingers, I can read it with my lips."

O, in that last hour when the world goes away from our grasp, press the precious Gospel to our lips, that in that dying kiss we may taste the sweetness of the promise, "When thou passest through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."—*Talmage.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

BY CHARLES HODGE, D. D.

Professor in the Theological Seminary,
Princeton, New Jersey. Vol. II. 8vo
pp. 732.

In this volume Dr. Hodge discusses "Anthropology" and "Soteriology." "Eschatology" will be the subject of the third and last volumes.

In discoursing on "Anthropology," the following topics are considered:—Origin of Man—Nature of Man—Origin of the Soul—Unity of the Human Race—Original Nature of Man—Covenant of Works—The Fall—Sin—Free Agency.

"Soteriology" is treated of in fourteen chapters, bearing the subjoined titles:—Plan of Salvation—Covenant of Grace—The Person of Christ—The Mediatorial Work of Christ—Prophetic Office—Priestly Office—Satisfaction of Christ—For whom did Christ die?—Theories of the Atonement—Intercession of Christ—Kingly Office of Christ—The Humiliation of Christ—The Exaltation of Christ—Vocation.

Here are 732 pages of very solid matter. It is "strong meat," requiring sound and powerful digestion. We would not recommend it to those who have weak mental stomachs, for it would be apt to disagree with them; not because it does not contain wholesome food, but because the persons alluded to are deficient in the power of assimilation. Thoughtful men, whether ministers or not, may be advised to procure the volume, and read and study it—a few pages at a time—with intervals for reflection. The novel may be gulped down at a sitting, as it often is; but no benefit will be derived from the perusal of such a work as this, unless it is read slowly and deliberately, and well thought over.

Every page furnishes food for thought, and even conflict of thought, for Dr. Hodge is not satisfied with stating his own views. He describes other theories and systems, and assigns reasons for his preference. Whoever, therefore, sits down to read this book with honesty of purpose will find himself compelled to think, and he will not complete his task without an attempt, at least, to do some hard thinking. So much the better. We want close thinkers and reasoners in the churches; we mean, that a larger supply of them is desirable. It is easier to declaim than to reason—to pull down than to build up—to scatter to the winds than to set in order. Dr. Hodge is a "wise master-builder;" it would be very useful to some men to be apprenticed to him.

Not that we can endorse all his sentiments. We cannot accept his views of what is called "the covenant of works." We should demur to some of his statements respecting original sin, and the distinction between the "covenant of grace" and the "covenant of redemption," most certainly, we cannot believe, with him, that "children are required to be baptized for the remission of sins" (p. 122). Nor do we think it expedient to employ so largely the technical language of theology, which too frequently "darkens counsel by words without knowledge." But the volume as a whole is a masterly exposition of Christian doctrine. We like it all the better, too, because it is Calvinistic: for Calvinism, we take it, (we mean *Join Calvin's* Calvinism—the Pedobaptism being eliminated—and not the caricature which is sometimes ignorantly set forth as its representation,) is in the main the system of the New Testament. Christians, generally, are Calvinistic in their prayers. When a man is on his knees before God, he cannot magnify his powers and performances. The language of humility, and dependence, and obligation, is felt to be more befitting.

Dr. Hodge's observation on "Trichotomy" appear to us to be very just.

Some persons hold that man possesses a threefold nature—body, soul, and spirit. Dr. Hodge maintains that it is more scriptural to speak of man as composed of body and soul.

"In opposition to all the forms of trichotomy, or the doctrine of a threefold substance in the constitution of man, it may be remarked, (1.) That it is opposed to the account of the creation of man as given in Gen. ii. 7. According to that account God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became "a living soul," i. e. a being in whom is a living soul. There is in this account no intimation of any thing more than the material body formed of the earth and the living principle derived from God. (2.) This doctrine (trichotomy) is opposed to the uniform usage of Scripture. So far from the *nephesh*, or soul, being distinguished from the *ruach*, or mind, as either originally different or as derived from it, these words designate one and the same thing. They are constantly interchanged. The one is substituted for the other, and all that is, or can be predicated of the one, is predicated of the other. [Dr. H. then proceeds to show that similar remarks may be made respecting the Greek words *pneuma* and *psyche*.] (3.) All the words above-mentioned, in Hebrew, Greek, and English, are used in the Scriptures indiscriminately of men and of irrational animals. If the Bible ascribed only a *psyche* to brutes, and both *psyche* and *pneuma* to man, there would be some ground for assuming that the two are essentially distinct. But such is not the case. The living principle in the brutes is called both *nephesh* and *ruach*, *psyche* and *pneuma*. That principle in the brute creation is irrational and mortal; in man it is rational and immortal. 'Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?' Eccles. iii. 21.

The soul of the brute is the immaterial principle which constitutes its life, and which is endowed with sensibility, and that measure of intelligence which experience shows the lower animals to possess. The soul in man is a created spirit of a higher order, which has not only the attributes of sensibility, memory, and instinct, but also the higher powers which pertain to one intellectual, moral, and religious life. As in the brutes it is not one substance that feels and another that remembers; so it is not one substance in man that is the subject of sensations, and another substance which has intuitions of necessary truths, and which is endowed with conscience and with the knowledge of God. Philosophers speak of world-consciousness, or the immediate cognition which we have of what is without us; of self-consciousness, or the knowledge of what is within us; and of God-consciousness, or our knowledge and sense of God. These all belong to one and the same immaterial rational substance. (4.) It is fair to appeal to the testimony of consciousness on this subject. We are conscious of our bodies and we are conscious of our souls, i. e. of the exercises and states of each; but no man is conscious of the *psyche* as distinct from the *pneuma*, of the soul as different from the spirit. In other words, consciousness reveals the existence of two substances in the constitution of our nature; but it does not reveal the existence of three substances, and therefore the existence of more than two cannot rationally be assumed." pp. 48, 49.

We should like to see this volume, and the entire work, when completed, in the studies of all our ministers. It may be procured at the British American Book Depository, in this city. C.

READING THE BIBLE.—I will answer for it, the longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ.—*Romaine.*